



# EVERGREEN Exclamations!

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## ENJOYING HIS INDEPENDENCE AS A YOUNG ADULT

Michael lived happily with his grandmother in a small Georgia town from the age of 6 to 13. Then his grandmother got cancer. She could no longer care for Michael, and he went to live with relatives in Texas.

Michael's Texas relatives cared for him until he turned 18, just a few months before he would graduate high school. As people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) become adults, services like public school and special education are no longer available. This decline in support can be a big challenge for people with IDD and their families.

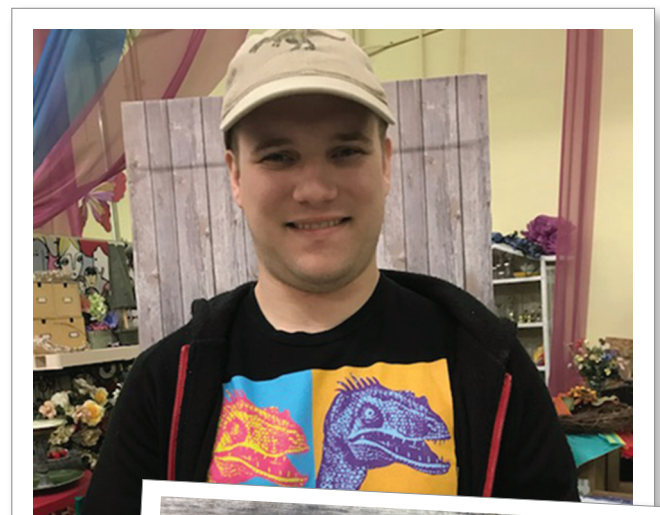
Questions raced through his family members' minds. What would Michael do all day when he finished high school? Would he live with them forever? Would he ever be able to live independently?

Thanks to your support, Evergreen provided an ideal solution for Michael and his family. By living in an Evergreen community home with five roommates, Michael was able to leave home and enjoy his independence.

People with IDDs are underemployed compared to people without disabilities. Your generosity allows Evergreen to offer vocational training programs to help those we serve achieve gainful and fair employment. Thanks to this program, Michael learned the skills to become a dishwasher at an assisted living facility, where he has worked for six years.

Michael's passion for Dinosaurs earned him the nickname "Dinosaur Man". When he was in high school, he would wander off campus to hunt for fossils. He once convinced his bus driver to drop him off at a field so that he could hunt for fossils.

Thanks to your generosity, Evergreen is able to encourage Michael's interests in Dinosaurs by exposing him to books and a variety of museums and exhibits.



**Above:** Michael is able to pursue his passion for learning everything there is to know about dinosaurs thanks to your support.

**Below:** One of Michael's many creations made in an Evergreen Cultural Art Center.

At an Evergreen Cultural Art Center, which exists thanks to your financial support, Michael has created a whole tribe of dinosaurs with clay and has

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In 1978, the first Walkman was introduced, Jimmy Carter was President, "Hotel California" by the Eagles was the record of the year, and John came to live at Evergreen.

When John arrived at Evergreen, he had challenging behavior and could be hard to control. It was a time when there simply were not a lot of opportunities for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). John's parents sought out Evergreen because, even 40 years ago, we believed in the power of community inclusion and the importance of teaching individuals to be as independent as possible. Their hope was that one day John would be able to live a normal life as part of his community.

**"John is very dependable," John's boss, Francesco Acuna says. "He is very popular with our members. He knows all their names – even their nicknames – and they stop to visit with him."**

Fast forward forty years to the present. John lives in his own apartment with the help of Evergreen's Supervised Independent Living Program. He has enjoyed solo living since the 90s after gaining enough independent living skills in his community home to live alone.

## MICHAEL from Page 1

sold many of them. Michael wants to teach the world about Dinosaurs, so his Evergreen team is working with him on presentation skills. Evergreen will record his Dinosaur lectures in segments and offer them



## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF BEING SERVED BY EVERGREEN

Evergreen's direct support professionals assist him with tasks like grocery shopping, meal preparation and getting to and from doctor's appointments. He is able to get around his central Louisiana community using the public bus system and is well known and liked around town.

Evergreen's Supportive Employment Program provides John with transportation to and from his job as a janitor at a tennis center in his town. He works five days a week and has been a valuable employee for more than 30 years.



*"Without Evergreen, I don't know where John would be," John's sister, Beth Compton, says. "My parents are able to grow old with peace of mind that John has the life skills and care he needs."*

Your support gives families like John's a gift many never thought possible – a full and independent life for their loved one.

to people who want to learn.

Without Evergreen, Michael would be left at home all day while his relatives went to work. His full potential would probably never be realized. You gave Michael the

opportunity to live as independently as possible. You gave him the training and support to achieve long term employment. And you gave him the freedom to pursue his interests.

# A NEW LIFE AS PART OF HER COMMUNITY

Think about what makes you happy. Family? Friends? A vacation or party that you're looking forward to? An accomplishment at work? Your home? Your pets?

Now imagine that you no longer had any of those things. That you lived on a large campus – similar to an old high school, surrounded by a lot of land. You and a dozen other people share a bedroom with fluorescent lights in the ceiling. Your communal toilets have a shower curtain for privacy. You are rarely able to leave the campus, mostly everything and everyone comes to you. You're stuck – in an isolated bubble of monotony.

This was what Alicia's life was like for 7 years. She lived in an institutional setting for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

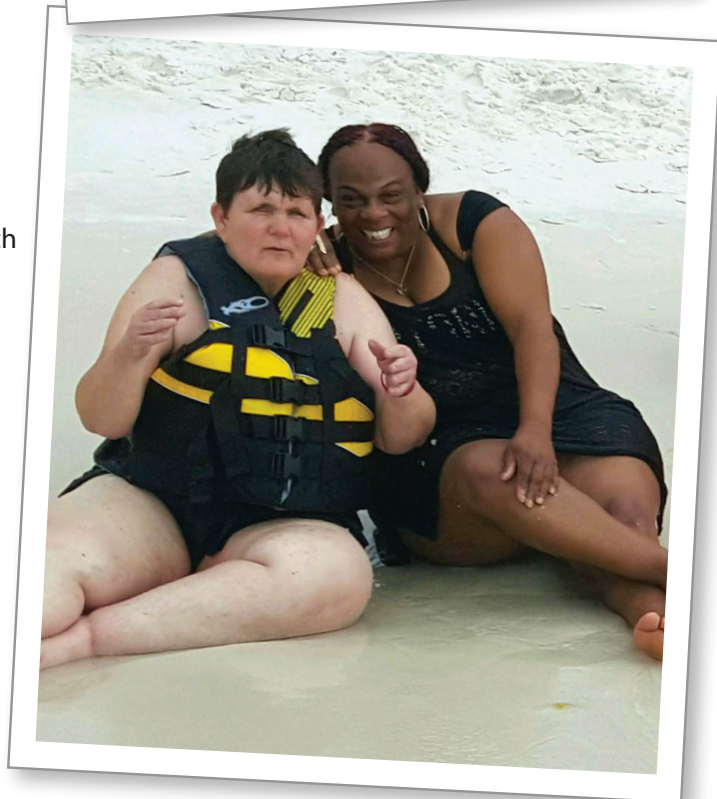
Thanks to your support, Evergreen was able to act when called upon to transition the individuals living in Alicia's institution into community-based settings. When Alicia's new Evergreen caregivers first met her, she displayed challenging behaviors and possessed poor communication skills. She would often hit and bite others and engage in self-injurious behavior, especially as a means of seeking food. She could not engage in a conversation and would simply repeat the question asked of her.

Alicia moved into an Evergreen community home that she shares with five housemates and where she enjoys the privacy of having a bedroom of her own. She is encouraged to express herself by decorating her bedroom and shopping for her clothes. Each day with Evergreen presents new choices for Alicia. What does she want to do today? Her Evergreen

caregivers focus on presenting Alicia with choices and encouraging her individuality.

Alicia is almost unrecognizable now that she has been living in her community for several years. She is making healthy food choices and is enjoying her membership at a local fitness center. As a result, she has lost a significant amount of weight. She is able to engage in conversations with people. She has friends, including a budding relationship with a special man. She calls her community home "home" and enjoys helping with chores and spending time with her housemates. Alicia has achieved huge milestones, which would not have been possible without your support.

Last summer, your contributions gave Alicia the ultimate gift. She and several Evergreen individuals took their first ever vacation to Destin, Florida. Alicia had never been to the beach before. She saw dolphins and built sand castles and still talks about her vacation. You gave her the experience of a lifetime!



*Alicia on the vacation that you gave her. She still talks about the amazing time she had.*

# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



A very special thank you to the **Community Foundation** and **United Way** (both of North Louisiana) for awarding our North Louisiana Divisions a grant of \$22,000 and \$6,000, respectively. The monies will be put to work right away to support the independence and community inclusion of the individuals we serve, by funding medical and dental care not covered by Medicaid.



**Above:** Board member R. Lewis Smith (second from left) pictured with Emily Smith of the Community Foundation (far right) and Evergreen staff.

**Left:** Lynn Stevens (center) of United Way pictured with Evergreen staff.



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